

HOUSE RESOLUTION 184

By Clemmons

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Thistle Farms on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body take great pleasure in paying tribute to an exemplary organization that provides women survivors with a new start in life; and

WHEREAS, Thistle Farms, a Nashville-based global program that employs nearly 2,000 women around the world, was founded some twenty years ago to help women who had been victims of trafficking, violence, prostitution, or addiction; and

WHEREAS, espousing a mission of healing, empowering, and employing these women survivors, Thistle Farms helps each of them build a future on a foundation of economic independence; and

WHEREAS, Thistle Farms was founded by Becca Stevens, herself a victim of child abuse, who was ordained as an Episcopal priest in 1991 and started working as a chaplain five years later; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, she and some friends opened Magdalene, their first sanctuary for women survivors of trafficking, addiction, or prostitution; and

WHEREAS, a social enterprise in which the workforce itself is the mission of the business, Thistle Farms manufactures and sells a wide array of body, home, and apparel products; and

WHEREAS, from its humble beginning of five employees, Thistle Farms has grown to become a global enterprise that employs more than 1,800 women survivors via trade around the world; and

WHEREAS, the residential Magdalene program in Nashville now provides a two-year program of housing, therapy, medical care, and education to thirty women plus eight more in the prison system; and

WHEREAS, another 300 women annually benefit from case management, employment, and advocacy/referral services; through a network of sister organizations, another 400 women across the country, in addition to 1,800 in other countries, are provided needed services; and

WHEREAS, the Café at Thistle Farms (formerly Thistle Stop Café) is also an important part of the organization's social enterprise; and

WHEREAS, the Café at Thistle Farms, led by culinary director and beloved Nashville chef Martha Stamps and staffed by Thistle Farm graduates, is a restaurant and special event space located on Charlotte Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the Café serves globally inspired, locally sourced breakfast and lunch items that are both healthy and delicious and features Nashville's only daily traditional tea service; and

WHEREAS, the Café has strengthened its ties to the community by sourcing its fresh, produce-driven food and beverage offerings from a variety of Middle Tennessee farmers and makers; and

WHEREAS, built on a business model of love, Thistle Farms is still growing and healing twenty years later, as the organization continues to give women survivors hope by helping them envision and pursue a future of economic independence; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor and recognize Thistle Farms on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary and thank Becca Stevens and her staff for providing a much-needed sanctuary for women survivors and helping them on their path to becoming productive and independent citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.